



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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**Massachusetts District Office  
10 Causeway Street  
Boston, MA 02222  
Phone: 617-565-5590**

**Contact: Joan M. Trudell  
Public Information Officer  
Phone: 617-565-5572  
joan.trudell@sba.gov  
Fax: 617-565-5597**

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### **BILL PICARD WINS NEW ENGLAND AND MASSACHUSETTS SBA AWARDS FOR ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF VETERANS**

**BOSTON** – William R. Picard, founding member and founding president of the Northeast Veteran-Owned Business Network, Inc., has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2004 New England and Massachusetts Veteran Small Business Advocate, according to an announcement made by Mark S. Hayward, Acting Massachusetts SBA District Director.

The Veteran Small Business Advocate Award is presented annually to an individual who has fulfilled a commitment to advancing small business opportunities for U.S. Armed Forces veterans. Picard was nominated for this award by James A. Coleson, president, New England Industrial Engineering, Inc.

"The SBA Advocate awards honor the best small business has to offer, and Bill Picard is an outstanding choice," said SBA Regional Administrator Jeffrey Butland. "This is an outstanding testimonial, not only to his accomplishments, but to his commitment and dedication to small business success and community service as well. I join my SBA colleagues in congratulating Bill on this significant achievement."

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The Northeast Veteran-Owned Business Network was founded in 2002 by founding members like Bill Picard and other service-disabled veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces as well as other veterans. The purpose of the organization is to further the knowledge of the benefits of the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, which provides for technical, financial and procurement assistance for service-disabled veterans and veteran-owned businesses. The network provides advice and information about resources available to veterans who are sole proprietors or own at least 51% of a business. Through Bill Picard's efforts veteran-owned businesses are kept informed of upcoming legislation both in Massachusetts and in the federal government.

"Mr. Picard's determination to honor and advocate for veterans has truly given them an effective voice in their local communities," said SBA Acting District Director Hayward. "He is the link for veterans to small business resources and services and a very effective advocate for veterans, their families and the small business community."

Picard will be honored at an awards breakfast at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston on June 10, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. The Massachusetts Small Business Person of the Year, Larry O'Toole, president of Somerville-based Gentle Giant Moving Company, Inc., will also be honored along with seven other small businesses and champions from throughout the state. The event is open to the public and those interested in attending should contact Christine Carter at SBA at 617-565-5560.

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